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*(Top) A district head in his reception room; behind him his clients are counting tax returns. The bags on the floor are shillings.*

*(Bottom) The palace of the Shehu of Bornu.*

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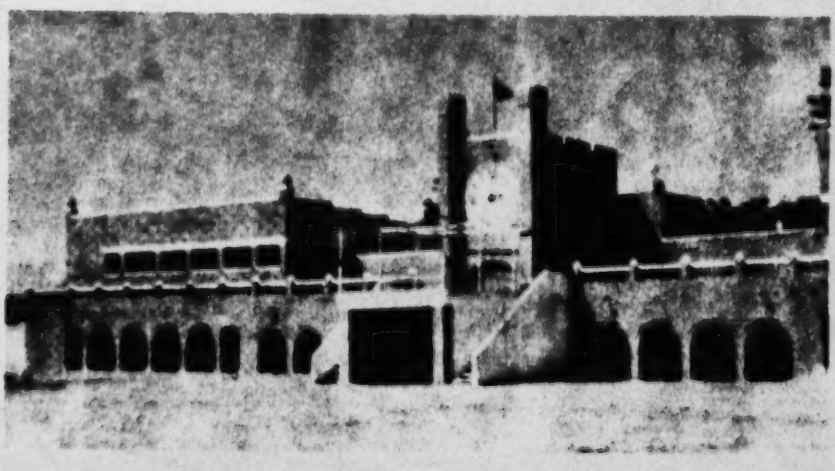

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daughters of sovereigns were the princes and princesses of the realm. Princesses were often given in marriage by the king to create alliances between the throne and other states, or nobles, or as rewards to trusted followers. Often, one among the princes was designated Chiroma or heir apparent. However, there was no hard and fast rule that the Chiroma either had the title for life, or that having been graced by the title its holder automatically succeeded to the throne. Although there was no special term for royal granddaughter, a king's grandsons who might become princes, if their fathers obtained the throne, were referred to by a special term.

Attached to the royal household by bonds of strict loyalty and obedience were the king's followers, some of whom lived in the palace, while others lived nearby. These, known as Koguna, together with members of the royal family and their followers provided the basis for the nobility of the state. They were of two main types—slave and free—with slaves being divided into ordinary slaves and eunuchs. The slaves originated from the slave trade or from raids made among pagan groups, or from the sons and daughters of slaves. The free nobility came from deroyalized segments of the royal family as it expanded through time and from descendants of nobles. This nobility was the source of personnel for the bulk of the administrative activities of the state. They served as the monarch's personal bodyguard, as messengers, military commanders, tax collectors, trusted spies, praise singers, slave raiders, consuls, and foreign emissaries. From their ranks came the people who bore the major titles of the state. Some of the titles were derived from Islam; others came from earlier times in Kanem or Bornu history. Although much changed in their nature, a number of these have survived to the present day.

In order to administer the kingdom, titled nobles, including the titled women of the royal family, were given fiefs equivalent to what are today village area units. All such holdings were fragmented and dispersed so that no one noble had control over any large portion of the state. The fief holdings varied in size and number per noble and were a measure of the political success of that particular noble at any point in time. The one exception was the Galidima. The holder of this title maintained a large consolidated set of village areas on the western boundary to protect the east-west trade and guard the western approaches to the capital city. The fief-holders raised militia for the monarch and taxes for themselves and the monarch. They also served as an appeal court system for the local people when they wished adjudication at higher than the local level. Thus people could obtain a royal audience by going through the fief hierarchy. The Kanuri also used the widespread Sudanese practice of dividing the kingdom into quadrants based on the four cardinal directions. Over each quadrant was a highly trusted follower of the king who could oversee the administration of his own quadrant, raise direct royal tax levies, and serve as an alternative form of hierarchy between the people and their ruler. The system functioned in this way as a check on the power of fief-holders, since the king could take fiefs away and redistribute them if there was sufficient reason for doing so. Through their own subordinates these quadrant leaders also administered the nomadic peoples of the kingdom who could not be easily worked into the administration of the fief system based as it was on settled populations. Two of the four leaders were always eunuchs, making for an automatically free power of appointment by the monarch, since these men had no heirs. The other two were always chosen from among the king's closest associates, although there was also a

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175 642 631 634 tendency for these two titles to be passed on down the male line. Even in this latter case, however, the king could always choose those most likely to be totally loyal to his administration from among the heirs, or even disregard the hereditary rule if he wished and give the title to some other person. The four quadrant leaders also had their own fiefs which they used as the basic support for their large household organizations in the capital.

175 648 Vassal groups and territories paid tribute in kind through their leaders to the treasury of the Mai of Bornu. In the heyday of Bornu during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries these vassals included a large number of surrounding peoples in what is now Northern Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. These subordinate groups were organized in two ways. In the first instance a Bornu consul was appointed to reside in the tributary state to help collect annual tributes and administer the government. This was in effect a kind of conquest and occupation used most often in adjacent and nearby territories. The second method was to leave the territory under the control of its own leaders after they had pledged their loyalty and their intention to pay tributes and give military support to Bornu whenever necessary; they were also expected to provide safety and hospitality to expeditions and caravans going to and from Bornu. Some of these vassal states were caught between two great powers. Such a case were the Hausa of northwestern Nigeria. Caught as they were between Songhai to the west and Bornu to the east they, therefore, paid tributes in two directions, always hoping that someday they could be relieved of these burdens by an increase in their own power or a decrease in the power of one or both of their overlords. Indeed Bornu traditions and written records are almost totally concerned with expeditions against reluctant tributaries who were remiss in the payment of their tributes. On the other hand, there are also accounts of tributary states sending to Bornu for help against external enemies and internal revolts; so the relationship could, and often did, work to the advantage of both the conqueror and the conquered.

175 793 692 The religious and legal life of the state was strongly influenced by the specialized religious practitioners who were steeped in the Koran and Islamic jurisprudence. The chief judge and religious leader of early Bornu was given the title of Talba and is referred to in traditions as "second to the king," or the next in authority to the monarch himself. He and his descendants and client followers knew the Arabic script and thus made up a literate group closely associated with political leaders as scribes, legal advisers and religious functionaries. These men sat in on judicial hearings and advised political leaders who adjudicated on the basis of their own knowledge of the law. Besides the Mai, most noble households kept such religious men within their compounds for similar purposes, and as instructors for the children. Under such conditions the religious leaders were also strong supporters of the state and its power structure.

175 651 Little is known of the details of taxation for the early Bornu kingdom although records are much better for the nineteenth century system. Obviously some form of tax was levied on local fiefs by fief-holders as well as by the monarch who also received tributes from vassal states and a major portion of booty from warfare. As we have already noted, it is fairly evident that royal taxation of the Bornu population itself was carried on through the efforts of the monarch's titled followers who held powers of royal taxation privilege in the four quadrants of the state.

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Tributes could be quite large; there are records of payments from Kanem to Bornu in the sixteenth century that mention amounts of 1000 head of cattle per year.

Along with taxation and other demands such as annual military service, there was a system of exemption whereby persons or groups were released from their obligations to the state in return for some service—usually prayers and other religious duties. These exemptions, *Mabram,* were made by royal declaration in writing which stipulated that facets of a person's obligation were henceforward considered to be *haram* or forbidden, like the eating of pork. One of the oldest of these, given to the family of Umme Jilma, declares that the family is forever exempt from (a) entertaining the king's men during the dry-season military and tax collection campaigns, (b) from *diya* or blood compensation for injuries inflicted on others by accident, and (c) all forms of tribute and taxes. In time, however, all these exemptions were often honored more in the breach or renegotiated. Thus one sixteenth-century monarch ordered a large group to go to war. These people promptly refused on the basis of a *Mabram* given them by a previous ruler. When the king insisted, the entire group prepared to leave his kingdom. However a compromise was worked out in which they accepted military service and paid practically no taxes. This very same group is mentioned again in the traditions at the beginning of the nineteenth century when Shehu Laminu ruled that their exemptions should pertain only to the leaders of the group, not the entire set of male line descendants of the original holders of this privilege, who by this time had become a very large population.

In its apogee during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Bornu kingdom was an expansionist power, and warfare was the state function par excellence. According to traditions and written records, as many as seven or eight military campaigns a year were not uncommon; this meant an expedition might leave Bornu every six or eight weeks during the dry season. With so much militarism the techniques of warfare elaborated accordingly. From at least the sixteenth century onward, Bornu imported muskets, swords, chain mail which were vital and ancient parts of the Saharan trade, although such armaments were also manufactured by Bornu craftsmen as well.

The army itself was organized into regiments, representing a local area or an ethnic group under their own leaders, and they went into battle according to a well laid out military strategy. Campaigns were amost always conducted against walled towns. The shield bearers advanced first; then after it was felt that the poison arrows of the enemy were exhausted, the rest of the army would advance either storming the walls or forcing the town dwellers to come out and fight—whereupon muskets and cavalry were used. Generally speaking open encounters were quite unusual; the Bornu army was large, well disciplined, and well equipped, while the town dwellers were weak in all these respects and would usually try to flee once the siege went against them. Fallen towns were then mercilessly looted and the inhabitants killed or enslaved.

After the campaign and the distribution of booty by the leaders, the army disbanded. Leaders of various territorial ethnic groups swore allegiance to the king and arranged for the next campaign to be held so many days hence. At that time, criers were sent around to local markets stating the date and place of rendezvous for the army. Able bodied men were expected to go or send a representative bear-

In later generations they often became a separate fief, or in some cases were absorbed into the territorial organization of the original fief. Again, the big lord might also settle some of his slaves in the fief, or he might ask to settle them in someone else's fief, or be asked by some other high ranking person if he would allow slaves to be settled in one of his own fiefs. Slaves delivered the results of their work on the land, and in craftwork directly to their own master whether this was the big lord of the fief or not. If they were in someone else's fief, presents were sent by their master to the senior fief-holder—the big lord—in the capital. It was also possible for the monarch or the big lord to settle holy men, men learned in the Koran, on a fief and such settlements were generally tax free.

There were two main taxes and innumerable smaller ones. Indeed, in the Kanuri language it is possible to denote the meaning of taxation, a tax on something, by simply adding the suffix "ram" to the activity or the object. Of the two main annual taxes, collected after the harvest, one went to the fief-holder and the other to the Shehu. The big lord collected tax on the basis of assessment of local produce by a special tax messenger who went out to the fief and after conferring with local leaders agreed on the tax. All who cooperated in tax collection kept some for themselves, passing surpluses on up the hierarchy to the big lord. In turn the fief-holder always gave gifts to the ruler upon receipt of their own fief-holder tax. Each year the Shehu appointed his own tax messengers from among the nobility and collected a royal tithe from the various fiefs. These men might and might not be fief-holders in their own right, but very often they were not collecting in their own fiefs. Other taxes were annual fees to local headmen, fees for clearing new land, for using new market space, for adjudication, for craftwork, for irrigation (where present), for extending any kind of privilege, etc. The system was essentially the same for the nomad groups, but one related complication should be noted. The people from dispersed localities owed some small taxation privileges to their previous headmen, even though they now lived in new settlements within new fiefs and were required to pay major taxes to their new settlement leaders.

One final point about the pre-colonial political system should be made. To understand such a kingdom it is necessary to keep distinct at all times the concept of a title from that of an office. The Kanuri kingdom had great rosters of noble titles that through time varied in number, numbers of holders per title, and the name of title. Some pre-nineteenth century titles such as the *Fufuma* or lord of the ancient capital city of Birni Ngazargamo dropped out of use. There were a number of men entitled Shettima while there was only one Digma or one Yerima. The titles are honorific, and even personal names which were attached to originally powerful households have become titles during Bornu's long history. Titles embellish a man' political duties, and even provide some opportunities for furthering his ambitions if their past history, or the activities of a title holder, enable him to manipulate the situation successfully for his own advancement. Offices on the other hand are positions in government giving the incumbent rights, duties, and obligations. An office may almost completely coincide with the title, as in the case of the ancient monarch whose title was Mai for probably a thousand years, and Shehu for the last century and a half. Or again offices can vary independently of titles. Thus the title of Digma which was held by a man with many official duties and much power in the mid-nineteenth century had changed by the end of the century, and the man

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came a very powerful group of chiefs through whom the kingdom was administered. When these men went to their districts, sometimes they had precolonial ties in these areas as big lords—some of the constituent towns in the district were their former fiefs; sometimes however they were complete strangers to the area. Besides this there was a constant shuffling of different district heads through transfers, dismissals, retirements, and deaths. The various village area heads under each district head were chosen on the basis of investigations conducted by the British colonial officials to find out who among the population had the hereditary right to leadership for a particular local settlement and its satellite communities. Very often there was no tie of previous loyalty between the village area head and the new district head. Previously the problem had been solved by sending out a chima gana or junior lord who represented the fief-holder. He had lived in the fief and created a set of loyal local followers. At first district heads did the same things. They sent out their own representatives—now called chima—to run the village areas in their district for them. This practice was soon discovered by the British and as early as 1910 was declared illegal, although it continued on until well into the 1930s, and there are even some district heads today who admit they use chima to ensure control of their district. In Chapter 6 we will take up this problem again and examine it in more detail within the organization of the district.

The central government of the emirate has undergone a number of significant changes under colonialism. At first the Shehu collected taxes on settled peoples through the district heads and taxes on nomads through two trusted slave nobles. This proved unsatisfactory to the British who very early in the century changed the system so that each district head was responsible for tax collection on both settled and on nomad populations in his district. This weakened the power of the Shehu, but at the same time (*ca.* 1914) the British began enforcing among themselves the idea that they must deal with the Bornu government through the Shehu and his Council. Thus good or bad reports of the district heads or village area heads had to be officially put through the Shehu giving him a great deal of either protective or punitive power over his district and village chiefs.

After 1914 there was an increasing effort to create a working Council for the Shehu with a modern treasury from which local planning could be financed. Starting with only a few members it has grown slowly through the years to function as a cabinet with a Waziri or chief minister at its helm. Each councilor has a portfolio or Native Authority department, such as Education, Works, Agriculture, and so on, and these have central offices in the capital with representatives spread out in district capitals throughout Bornu. The experience in this twentieth-century emirate has produced Kanuri who now take part in regional and national politics so that men from Bornu sit in Kaduna, Lagos, London, and even at the United Nations in New York.

The movement of fief-holders out into the bush to administer districts produced a district capital where the ajia or district head resides. To this capital he brought his urban followers; and to the village as well came the district judge and his retinue. As the Native Authority departments developed, local representatives of the various civil service departments of the emirate government came out to the district capital as well. This makes the district capital a more complex and urbanized center and has forced the effects of such urbanization to spread widely

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and he is a *tada njima* or client of the settlement head. All residents of this new settlement look upon its founder as their local leader. Disputes between members are always taken to Aji before going to any higher authorities while disputes with outsiders follow the general Bornu rule of going first to a political leader superior in rank to both participants. The new settlement does not have a name; however in all likelihood if it continues to grow and Aji's place is taken by one of his heirs, either his brother or his son, it will be called Aji or Ajiri after its founder. At present Aji collects taxes from the men of the new community, and these are taken by the hamlet head of Gworongo to the head of Magumeri village area. Aji hopes that one day he will be able to take the taxes directly to Magumeri, thus helping to indicate his equal political status to that of the hamlet head of Gworongo. When that happens he will be a recognized bullama or head man of a hamlet or ward. He tries to take disputes directly to Magumeri village, but in 1957 this was not accepted and the hamlet head of Gworongo was invariably called to sit in on such discussions.

The same process can be seen operating in larger villages. In Magumeri village itself one ward under its bullama (ward or hamlet head) was, in 1957, becoming large enough so that people were beginning to speak of the possibility of its splitting into two under the old bullama and a new one. In the ward a man named Kachella has under his authority the compounds of several younger full brothers, three of his sons two of whom are married, several nephews, and a few unrelated clients who say they are his *tada njima*. He collects taxes from these compounds and takes the money directly to the village head of Magumeri. However he recognizes the authority of the present ward head in settling disputes and always consults the latter first before taking the matter to a higher authority. One of his sons has married a girl from the household of the ward head and this helps link the two households. The ward head seems tolerant of the rising power and influence of his neighbor and always consults him on any major decision affecting the ward. Eventually however, if the set of linked households under the authority of Kachella continues to expand, then he will become a recognized bullama of his own ward of the village and the office will be passed on to his heirs.

## The Village Area

The village area in Bornu includes a major settlement which gives the area its name and a set of surrounding smaller hamlets that are included within the political boundaries of the village area. Thus Magumeri village area includes the village of Magumeri and a series of little hamlets in the surrounding countryside. As we have seen, smaller villages are divided into wards under bullama and the hamlets surrounding the village each have their own bullama as well. In other words all recognized political leaders under a village area head are called bullama. The head of a village area, that is, the political superior of all bullamas in the village area is called the *lawan*. However the system is flexible and a few large cities such as the capital city of Maiduguri, as well as several other centers with populations over 10,000, have several lawan, each in his own ward of the city. Under these city lawan are sub-wards again under the bullama. Thus the traditional nineteenth-cen-

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tury system of a flexible hierarchy described in Chapter 2 in which the number and authority of political offices can expand with the settlement size is still recognized and practiced.

In Magumeri village area one lawan is responsible for the administration of the entire area. All permanent residents in the area, when asked who their local leader is, reply, "We are the commoners of Lawan Mina. We are his people." This does not apply, or at least applies less, to those persons who live locally and are themselves higher in the political hierarchy than lawan or are local representatives of the emirate civil service departments. They have their own political superiors and are responsible to others besides the lawan. Thus they give their taxes to lawan because they live in Magumeri, and he must collect the village tax, but a dispute between one of these men and a peasant would be adjudicated at a higher level in the political hierarchy than that held by lawan.

In his own part of town the lawan acts as his own ward head. Many of the compounds in the ward are reserved for his own followers, In Magumeri this includes the lawan's own compound with his four wives, married son and grandchildren, several clients and his aged mother. Some twenty followers consider themselves the active supporters of lawan under his chief follower or *wakil*. Each of these men have their own compounds near that of lawan or at least in his ward. They receive economic aid from him in the form of food, clothing, and money as well as a recognized role as a member of his retinue. Peasants often ask one of these followers to intercede with the lawan on their behalf, or to help in arranging a meeting between parties to a dispute with the lawan as the judge.

This retinue of followers who are called collectively by a special name (*waladi*) are linked together under the lawan and serve as his administrative staff. They keep in touch with gossip, aid in collecting taxes, act as contact men for anyone wishing to see him, help him on his farm plots, and carry messages for him. When he travels, several of these men are always with him on horse and on foot, and give him the appearance of being what he is—a man a cut above the common citizenry of the village area—a local official of the kingdom whose title is conferred officially by the Shehu himself. Indeed today his is the lowest rung of the political hierarchy that is recognized as a salaried job in the emirate.

This entire administrative organization of the lawan can easily be discerned by asking the people of his ward whether they would move to another village if he were transferred or dismissed. There are quite a large number in the ward who would remain. These are not his followers but they do regard him as the leader of their ward and like everyone else in the emirate they see him as the official leader of their village area. They have seen several lawans come and go, and if this particular lawan were to continually overstep the limits of his authority, they would not be averse to making some complaints about him to his superiors. Thus their good will and support must be solicited by the lawan. Indeed such a check on his authority applies to all the people in the village area. Another check which any person in the area has over the lawan is the possibility of migration. Any person is free to move away from the village area into another whenever he wishes, and a serious migration out of some political unit weakens the leadership and is almost always interpreted as a sign of faulty administration by superiors in the emirate government.

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The lawan's son in Magumeri, like many others whose fathers have positions of authority, wisely avoids any active leadership in his father's administration. His job as the adult education organizer for a literary campaign in the entire district keeps him traveling much of the time, and he never interferes with the political organization which he may one day inherit. His father, on the other hand, is one of the few enthusiastic supporters of adult education and enforces the program vigorously in Magumeri since he knows this will help his son's career in the Bornu emirate government. If and when the son should ever replace his father, or gain some political office elsewhere in the kingdom, he would recruit many of his subordinates from the households of his father's followers. Thus superior-subordinate relations are often continued down the generations. Some fall by the wayside because there are always more potential followers available than needed, as the households of followers expand with their own children and clients. However since the son may choose any one within or beyond his father's administration he can insist on only the best performance and the most loyalty from those chosen. On the other hand, should the son not obtain his father's position, and not succeed in any other way in the political or economic life of Bornu, then his father's followers will begin to see that they must find places elsewhere for the younger members of their own households. When this happens the continuity of lawan's administration down the generations begins to disintegrate. This process is repeated at every level of the political hierarchy and lies near the core of political life in Bornu.

On a day-to-day basis the most important matters, especially in rural areas like Magumeri, are taken to the lawan. As we have seen in Chapter 5 he is a central figure in transferring land, using his office as a sort of registry for local land negotiations. He witnesses many marriages and divorces, and arbitrates disputes among those under his jurisdiction. Indeed most of the people living in Magumeri feel more secure about a decision they have made that might affect their neighbors if the matter is ratified and witnessed by a person in authority. Thus if a man in Magumeri village wishes to move his compound walls and expand his dwelling space, he speaks to his ward head about it, and they both go to the lawan to report the intended action. The lawan asks one or two of his followers to find out if the contiguous neighbors object, and if so on what grounds. If there is no objection the action is ratified; if some are forthcoming, then a judicial hearing results in which the lawan hears the case. What this means is that for almost everyone in Bornu, especially in the rural areas, an enormous number of everyday activities are taken through the political system when relations between households are at issue. This in turn means that the political system is close to and very involved with the daily lives of the people.

As a salaried official of the emirate government, the lawan collects taxes from all men over eighteen in the village area. This is based on property assessments of their capital in cash and kind for that particular year. Over-taxing is common in rural areas where the people are illiterate, and even when it is not done, the taxpayers believe it is common. If the over-taxing is too burdensome, it is known that complaints against the lawan to higher officials in Bornu can bring at least an investigation and perhaps lead to his dismissal.

There is no doubt that the lawan can punish people for not recognizing his

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If the lawan continued to adjudicate against him and gave him heavy fines, then he should request to take the case to a higher court. Thus the teacher wished his peasant-follower to make his peace with the lawan but if this were impossible, then higher authorities would be resorted to and the lawan's power bypassed. In other words the teacher felt that the political structure of the town should be respected but within limits.

Bukar's problem illustrates how a lawan can make reprisals when he feels that there has been some lack of recognition given to his authority by those under his administration. There are a large number of things in land matters, general disputes, ceremonials, divorces, default of bad debts, assault, housing, and commerce that come within his perview and intersect the lives of his people at a great many points and in many vulnerable ways. Therefore to thwart his authority and then remain within the orbit of his power without the possibility of reprisals would be impossible.

Recruitment to the office of the lawan is officially carried out by appointment from the emirate government at the capital. There is an official investiture ceremony at the capital, as in the nineteenth century, in which the lawan receives a turban from the Shehu of Bornu. In general there is a tendency, but only a tendency, for lawans to inherit the position. Thus one of the male heirs of the lawan takes over his household site and becomes the new lawan after his death. A male heir can be anyone in the male line of the lawan although sons seem to be favored. On the other hand many of the village areas have a history in which the office has gone to a number of men based on their particular relationship to the district head, the immediate superior of the lawan in the political hierarchy. Thus there is also a tendency for the lawan to be appointed from the ranks of the incumbent district head's followers so that the office also tends to shift from one agnatic descent group to another in relation to shifts in the person of the district head.

One other factor is important in the succession to a lawan's office. This has to do with the political allegiance of the lawan in the political hierarchy of Bornu emirate. If a lawan dies, or is dismissed, and he is not friendly to a new district head, then whether or not the district head attempts to replace him depends (a) on what are the lawan's political connections beyond that of his official superior, the district head, and (b) whether the new district head can procure the loyalty of the lawan and therefore enlist him into his own following. If a lawan has very powerful friends in the emirate, then the new district head could incur their wrath by getting the lawan out of office. A lawan is removed from his village area headship for a number of reasons although they can all be subsumed under three broad categories. First the political maneuverings of a district head who wishes to replace the lawan with his own followers. Secondly, excessive migration out of the village area, or complaints to higher officials by the peasants against the lawan, and thirdly, failure to raise enough taxes. These may, of course, be interrelated so that, for example, migration out of the village area would be spotted in the tax returns or by complaints resulting from the lawan's plan to cover up by taxing those who remain more than is bearable, thus bringing on complaints. However, if a lawan is responsive to his superiors, and does not mulct his peasants to the point of hardship, migration, and complaint, he has a fairly secure position in the Bornu political system.

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On the other hand the local official must work through the district head if he wishes to carry out his job successfully. Children are ordered into the district school through the district head's office. Forestry reserves are set up by his directive; cattle are rounded up by him. Indeed almost any action involving a response by the people in the district must come originally from the district head. A lawan, if approached for cooperation by civil service employees, would generally refuse to cooperate if he had not been first notified by the district head's office. The district head is a high official of the state while the native authority employee is generally the lowest status field representative of his department. Thus they pay the district head respect, stand up when he approaches them, take off their shoes before entering his compound, and consult him on programs they wish to have carried out in his district.

On his part the district head quickly establishes who the native authority officials are, and what families they come from or are connected to in the emirate. If the district head is closely connected by friendship and political alliance to a high-placed official in the local representative's department, then he may have an avenue of control over this local person through the latter's own superior. On the other hand the native authority employee may be connected with the powerful people in the emirate and the district head then knows that this particular official could possibly bring powerful forces into action if a situation warranted it.

The relationships of the district head to the capital are highly complex and result from the fact that he is the official link between the central government of the emirate and the local political organization of the district. Officially he is responsible to only one body, the central agency of the emirate government which is the Shehu-in-Council. This council, called the Bornu Native Authority Council, under the chairmanship of the Waziri or chief minister, is the highest authority in the emirate. As we noted in Chapter 2, the council acts like a cabinet and each member has a Native Authority department under his direction. District heads receive instructions about policy from the council and directives about programs from each of the departments. The district head delivers taxes to the Native Authority Treasury and must account for his actions to the council which has a major voice in appointing, dismissing, retiring, and transferring district heads from high to low-paying districts or vice versa.

Both during the colonial period and at the present, the Bornu Provincial Government has had several emirates under its jurisdiction, of which Bornu is the largest. Although not officially responsible to the Provincial Government, the district head and his work have always been inspected periodically by touring officers of the Provincial Government. These men can make recommendations which influence the emirate government and during colonial times there are a number of records of district heads being retired or dismissed because of the "advice" of Provincial Government officials. Thus the district head has to be sure his actions are in line with the demands and standards of provincial officials who are today generally from other parts of Northern Nigeria, and were, up to a few years ago, the British colonial officers.

The district head has other links with the capital as well. As we have already noted, he keeps a household in the palace ward of the capital city, and his followers in his compound under a wakil, or chief follower, visit the palace regu-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14



larly as his representatives. The wakil also makes regular visits to important emirate leaders and tries to maintain a constant check on political developments in the capital and the emirate as a whole. Through this organization and through the giving of gifts and hospitality to visitors and messengers from the capital, as well as cultivating high placed friends, the district head maintains and builds up a communication network through which he obtains a many-sided picture of events in the capital.

District heads are also linked to the capital by their membership in factions that help to make up the political life of the emirate. In pre-colonial times these factions grew out of the allegiance of nobles to the various segments of the royal lineage. This indeed was the reason the succession disputes to the throne could turn into bloody civil wars. These same traditional factions still exist today, but there have been added new ones which involve close alliances between very powerful men in the emirate government. These reflect the weakened authority of the Shehu, and the increase in power and authority of the Native Authority officials in the top positions of the emirate government. District heads linked to more powerful factions receive better information about the course of emirate politics and more protection when they need it than those related to weak ones. Thus one district head might be linked to a member of the royal family who has no official position in the Native Authority and who has little hope of gaining the throne; another might be closely linked to the Waziri or chairman of the Bornu Native Authority Council. The latter district head, because of his factional membership, is in a much stronger position in the emirate political organization as a whole than is the former. These links to the center both official and unofficial must be carefully developed and maintained by a district head. This is especially true when it is realized that a district head like any other member of the Bornu political system operates within two cultural orientations—one western and the other traditional Kanuri. The district head should give gifts to subordinates, to his faction leaders, and to many other powerful people in the state. From a western point of view these can be seen as bribes, while from a Kanuri vantage point they may be looked upon as obligatory and legitimate recognition by the district head of the power and protection that can be wielded by his superiors in the central government of the emirate. Since such expenses are not provided for in the district head's official salary, the means by which he obtains the wealth to make such gifts often involves breaking rules according to strict western civil service standards, although again such activities might be considered legitimate by local tradition.

The central focus of this behavior revolves around tax collection. The district head is seen in western terms to be an agent of government who collects taxes and is paid a salary for this and other services. However, he needs to maintain a large following who are not provided for by government if he is going to collect nomad cattle taxes. These men must ride out over the entire district—often several thousand square miles—to collect the tax. To keep these men as his tax collectors he needs much more revenue than his own salary. If he does not collect the tax, or enough taxes, he will be punished by dismissal or transfer to a smaller less prestigious district. He has very little choice; in order to keep his own organization going and to maintain friendly contact at the center by gift-giving, he must take some of the district's tax revenue for himself. This makes him vulnerable at all times; to comply with some demands which are deemed important he must break others

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14



which he hopes are less important. Furthermore, as in any bureaucracy, standards and their enforcement change through time, often as a result of changing personnel at the top. A new council member may have become interested in school latrines and suddenly start forcing compliance with the rules about such things. Failure to do so or to hear about the stringency with which the old previously unimportant policies are now being enforced could bring trouble to the district head who failed to comply. This is why information about policy and the cultivation of powerful friends in the central government is so important for the district head.

Before leaving the rural area a word should be said about adjudication. All leaders in the Bornu political system adjudicate disputes, and the political hierarchy itself serves as an appeals court system. Thus a peasant can take his dispute with a neighbor to his bullama (hamlet or ward head), who may decide to take the case up to the lawan (village area head), who in turn may decide to take the case to the district head. The district head may further decide to send the case over to the district court, and, if necessary, the district court can send the case into the capital city, to the court of the chief alkali of Bornu (chief judge's court). People can go directly to the judge's or district court, and in the city many do. Even with very serious cases like murder which must go into the central court in the city, the people taking the murderer into the city court most often go up the political hierarchy reporting the case each time they see another official even though there is no adjudication, thus giving recognition to their political leaders rather than going directly to a higher court.

Cases are tried by a combination of Muslim law and local custom. The chief or judge listens to the case, and if three witnesses swear for one side in a dispute but not the other, then the side whose witness has sworn wins the case. If no one swears evidence or too many people swear on both sides, then the judge listens while his assistant in the court interrogates the parties involved. The judge, whoever he may be, then makes a decision. Very often the interrogation itself tends to move the evidence towards one side in a dispute or another. Usually if a crowd gathers, one can see by simply listening to the crowd which side of the court case is winning the argument. On the whole decisions are just unless there have been previous and difficult relations between the adjudicator and any of the parties concerned. Swearing evidence in a court is called "eating the Koran"; that is to say, a person must swear on the holy book. If he tells a lie, it is believed that his hand will shrivel and he will die of horrible diseases. This belief is widespread and it is genuinely feared that the traditionally implied consequences of lying in court are in fact quite true.

## The Organization at the Center

In Maiduguri at the eastern end of the royal plaza is the palace of the Shehu, flanked on one side by the mosque and on the other by the official residence of the Waziri or chief minister of the emirate. The Shehu is the formal head of government. All measures, policies, appointments, made within the state are in his name; titles are granted at official investiture ceremonies carried on in the royal palace and he is the formal leader of the religious community of the state. This is em-

648 the actual administrative power. The twenty-one District Heads
648 in Bornu Emirate were appointed by the Shehu, as was the Waziri,
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634 and the members of the Shehu's council. Although these appoint-
ments formally need not be approved by the British administra-
tion, in practice their approval was necessary.

634 The system of District Heads replaced the feudal absentee
175 landlords who controlled Bornu in the latter half of the nine-
631
178 teenth century. Many peasants still refer to their District
[651] Head as chima, the name for the feudal lord of former times,
since one of the main functions of the District Head is the
[329] collection of taxes. Although many commoners continue to view
the system today much as their ancestors looked upon the polit-
ical system during the days of the Bornu Empire, radical changes
[642] had been brought about. Under the empire actions and decisions
of the feudal lords were subject only to the disapproval of the
[648] Shehu, the absolute ruler. Today a still larger political unit,
the government of Nigeria, maintains a legal system which pro-
tects all citizens though they may not be aware of it. A Kanuri
could appeal out of his own political system, and seek the pro-
tection of a British District Officer against the ruling of his
own Village Head or District Head. Obviously such a move might
have serious repercussions and not many individuals decided to
take the step. Nevertheless, the alternative existed.

692 In accordance with the British practice of ruling through
779 native institutions where possible, the formal legal system of
Northern Nigeria continued to be Islamic law, more precisely

178 added feature that large sums of money must be distributed when
565 a man receives a title. Thus changes in the meaning and value
554 of noble titles have accompanied the changing position of the
431 aristocracy in the social structure of Kanuri society.

5. Material Changes.

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494 A number of material changes have been introduced which have also had important ramifications. The first of these is the communications system. Nowadays trucks go everywhere, carrying people and produce, tying remote towns to the cities, fostering trade, and allowing a much greater amount of individual mobility than existed in former times. Often the trucks pioneered the roads, beating down the bush in order to reach a village and carry out the peanuts, and thereby creating a
[653] road which would later be maintained as such. The roads are maintained by the Provincial Public Works Department, under a
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312 Provincial Engineer. The Public Works Department is also in
[603] charge of rural water supply which is responsible for the digging of new wells. Since the productivity of the region is a
[361] function of available water, the digging of new wells has led to the founding of new villages in sparsely populated areas. A secure and good year-round water supply is necessary for a thriv-
[563] ing village. In addition, Fulani herdsmen, always an asset to
[651] the local economy and a good source for local taxation, will be
178 attracted to new watering places for their cattle. Trucks, roads, and wells have had important effects on the way of life

El Kanemi brought
175 with him a group of Kanembu and Shuwa nobles, who formed the
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565 nucleus, along with their men, of the army which drove back
177 the Fulani invaders of Bornu. These noble Kanembu families remained in Bornu and adopted Kanuri culture. El Kanemi built the new capital of Bornu at Kukawa, and his son Shehu Omar
175 ruled from Kukawa. The empire of Bornu had declined greatly
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565 from its zenith in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and the Fulani attacks were both a sign of its weakness and an additional factor in furthering the decline. In form, however, the empire remained much the same. Many of the old families who had been aristocrats under the Mais retained
175 their titles, their lands and their position. The new noble
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565 Kanembu and Shuwa families that had followed el Kanemi were given Kanuri titles and entered the social system as Kanuri aristocracy. In time, they accepted Kanuri culture, according to accepted procedures of assimilation which are well understood by the Kanuri and apply to conquerors and conquered alike, to slaves and to freemen.

175 The Shehu and his court ruled in Kukawa. Members of the
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565 royal family were given large tracts of land, including many
631 villages, and from their lands they took money for taxes paid
423 to the central government and for their own uses. In like fash-
[651] ion, the nobility, who were the commanders of army regiments and holders of high titles, had their lands and villages. These were the chimas. Even religious leaders, such as the Imam, were
175 given land. The nobles who were chimas, continued to live in
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631

175 Heads or Ajias. The only important difference between the two,
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648 from the point of view of the Kanuri farmer, is that the Ajia
634 lived in the capital of his District, while the chima lived in
[642] Kukawa. There were, in fact, great differences between the two, because the British Resident ultimately controlled all policy decisions at the upper levels. But the Kanuri villager knew little of this. It is striking to note how many of the District Heads in 1956-1957 were the heads of the same noble families from which the chimas of the last century were chosen. The British, with or without knowing it, had kept the aristocratic families in positions of political power, at the same time preserving the old political structure of the empire.

175 The Ajias, in their turn, have kept their own kabuna to
634 help them in administering their districts. From their kabuna
632 they have selected the most trusted to serve as Lowans. Since many of the Ajias came from the nobility, they had many slaves whom they inherited from their fathers. These were frequently their most trusted kabuna, though not all kabuna are slaves. Many of the Ajias are slaves of the Shehu, and many of the Lowans are slaves of the Ajias. Ajia and Lowan alike settle disputes, and collect taxes, their two most important functions.

[692]
[651]

## C. Religion

779 The Kanuri are Moslems. Islam entered Bornu in the elev-
[175] enth century, and since that time has spread throughout the entire Kanuri population. Unlike the Hausa, where a large part

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563 at different times, or may have become assimilated to Kanuri
17 culture. A shatter-belt of small tribes, part-pagan and part-Moslem, and strongly influenced by Kanuri culture, rings Bornu Emirate. (These have been described in Chapter I.) North of Bornu are the Kanembu, closely related culturally and linguistically to the Kanuri, and with an inter-twined history that goes back to the Empire of Kanem, which preceded the Empire of Bornu.
[614] The Kanembu and the Kanuri share another set of jilis--which appear to be the remnants of patrilineal kin groups, or patri-sibs.

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614 The word jili will here be used in a very restricted sense to refer to the sib. Informants with an interest in the history of Bornu and with a strong historic sense relate that the jilis were no longer functioning in the days when Shehu Laminu ruled at Kukawa. Kanuri, Kanembu and all the sub-groups of Kanuri (Kwoyam, Mobber, Manga etc.) were sub-divided into jilis with
[304] the same names cross-cutting them. A child was of the same jili as his father, and each jili had its distinctive facial scars by which its members could immediately be identified. The jili was not endogamous. Each jili had its common ancestor, whose name is known for every jili; each jili had as its head
[65] someone appointed by the Mai, or king. The primary function of the jili head was to collect taxes (haraji) from the people of
[643] his jili. The Mais of old were of the jili Magumi, the royal
[613] sib, and of the sub-jili Sef. All individuals of the sub-jili Sef are descended from Sef Isami who is reputed to have come

175 554 565 [642] [556] [651] their lands; they had wealth because of their rights to tax the populace, as well as their access to large tracts of farm land worked by the populace for the benefit of their chima, and to labor in the form of tax payment to the chima. The chimas had prestige which rested in the noble title which they bore. But, interestingly enough, it was not necessary to be free-born in order to be a chima, or in order to receive a title. A slave of the Shehu could himself occupy a position of enormous power as a titled chima, could be extremely wealthy, and would be respected as well as feared by the talaka, the free-born populace.

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554 565 592 Lastly, it should be borne in mind that these attributes which determine social position are shared by an entire household, and not solely by one individual. It is true that only one man is granted a title, but he is the head of a large household. The more important the man, and the greater his title, the larger will be his household, including: number of wives, slaves, concubines, children given to him, and tata njima. These all share to an extent in the increased power and wealth of the titled household head. As his own position rises, his slaves and tata njima increasingly receive greater power and responsibility. They become his kabuna, collect taxes for him, administer the lands and eventually hope to be appointed Lowans, by which time they themselves will have large and important households.

632 563 167 turn to their northern villages. A group of Bouzou work at camel transport, and live in a cluster near the slaughter-slab area. Another group of Bouzou work as water-carriers and come [162] to live in Geidam between agricultural seasons. They all, up to thirty in number, live in the compound of Lowan Ashek.

632 621 Lastly a group of pagans are to be found in a small hamlet called Koldi, about 400 yards northwest of the town proper. [162] There are forty-five households in Koldi, with a total popula- [622] tion of 134. Koldi has its own Bulama, but Lowan Ashek serves [65] as the Lowan of Koldi and is responsible for tax collection 632 there. The people of Koldi are largely pagan (kordi), and mem- 621 563 bers of the following tribes are found there: Banana, Kim, Ka- 177 bam, Ngizim, Kabalia, Mandara, Kotoko, Gwoza and Fulani. Most of these are tribes found east and south of the Shari River, whose people are pagan or partially Islamized. This is the shatter-belt area between the Empires of Bornu and those of [302] Mandara and Bagirmi. The women of Koldi all do their hair in the Kanuri manner, and the people of Koldi are strongly acculturated to the Kanuri. In fact many Kanuri are found living in [771] Koldi. They are characterized primarily by their lax attitude [275] towards Islam, and are considered pagan because they brew millet beer there. No beer is brewed in Geidam proper, so that Kanuri youths wishing to partake of the local brew are forced to slip [534] away unseen to Koldi. Drumming can constantly be heard in the 632 evenings from the direction of Koldi. The people of Koldi all 621 [243] have farms of millet in the surrounding area, but in addition [285] [463]

128 erally which was discussed in the previous chapter. At times,
[125] quantitative data will be presented on a sample of 44 individuals, representing various selected social categories (see further definition of this sample given in Chapter 4).

1. Farming.

42 All land belongs, in theory, to the Shehu and is distributed by Lowans through the authority given them by the Shehu. A man living in the town of Geidam has a right to land surrounding the town, should he wish to make a farm. Such land becomes his in the sense that no one else can farm there, and it is inherited
[451] by his children like other forms of property. Any man who pays the property tax (haraji) in Geidam has a right to land. A newcomer to the town who desires land to farm asks a Lowan for a
[311] plot of land. Since all farm land up to two miles from the edge of the town is farmed by those previously settled in the town, land given to newcomers is uncleared brush far from the town it-
[662] self. However, by paying a sum to the Lowan, a man may be assigned land which is much closer and therefore more desirable. Unused sites become available when people leave Geidam.

House sites come under the same provisions as farm land. If a man wishes to build a house in Geidam he must first ask the permission of the Lowan in whose ward he seeks to build his house. If he wishes to build on unoccupied land he must pay a
[435] sum to the Lowan. The sum may vary from three to ten shillings, depending on the man's means. A man can sell a house which he

42 has built, as it was built through his labor or his money.
[435] Since there is great pressure for desirable house sites, an old house which is no longer worth much but is located on a good site will be sold for an amount far exceeding the value of the house itself. To all intents and purposes the owner is selling
42 226 the land on which the house stands. Fishing sites along the river are under the "ownership" of the Lowans, and sites are given to people to use. Fishing sites are inherited but may not be sold.

425 178 As was pointed out earlier, land is increasingly viewed as a commodity which can be bought and sold. Original Kanuri ideas about land have been undergoing change. Just as house sites within the town are sold, so too farm land is sold under
425 671 [631] certain conditions. The legality of these proceedings, according to Kanuri law, is still somewhat vague. A stranger coming to Geidam will be given land to farm only if he intends to remain in Geidam and will pay his haraji there. A Geidam man who moves elsewhere, and does not intend to return, will consequently be paying his haraji in the new town where he will settle. He
[427] forfeits the rights which he held to farmland in Geidam. Nor may he sell that land except under special conditions. However, one Geidam man may give, rent or sell his farm land to another Geidam man. Both, of course, continue to pay haraji in Geidam. According to the Alkali of Geidam, sale of farm land is legally viewed in the following manner: if a man's father worked a piece of land and he in turn inherited that land, his possession of the

627 829 691 and he has had an opportunity to present his side of the dispute. If he feels that the mediator has been bribed and the [626] case has not been properly handled, he knows that he must never bring a case for sholo before that Ajia or Lowan again and he will let his relatives, friends, and neighbors know what occurred. If a decision has been against him, and he has no reason to suspect that it was not fairly given, then he cannot take the case for further sholo, since his case has already been decided. Taking his case before the Alkali would be to take it once again for sholo, and if he had trusted the Alkali more than he did the Lowan who originally gave sholo in the case, he would have brought his complaint directly to the Al- [693] kali in the first place. In addition, the court exacts wushira from the winner, more than is paid in sholo, as well as other fees paid to police who bring in witnesses, and to court appointed assessors of property, in property disputes.

4. Taxation and the role of kabuna.

663 631 The two primary responsibilities of a Kanuri political official are to properly administer his territory and to collect taxes. The first duty involves the handling of disputes and [565] maintaining adequate control over subordinates. So long as the traditional social system remains in effect, each class of individual will know its place, talaka will come to those in authority for sholo, subordinates will fear and respect their superiors, and those in power will not usurp their power by unduly exploiting the populace.

000 unduly exploiting the populace.

651 The second duty is to collect taxes. These fall into two categories: haraji--a tax on houses, sheep and goats, and [563] other forms of property and jangali--a tax on cattle. Since cattle are so important in the economy of the area, much tax revenue is derived from jangali of which there are three forms: nomad jangali, collected from the semi-nomadic pastoral peoples, Kwoyam, Buduwai, Shuwa Arab, and particularly Fulani, by far the largest pastoral group in Geidam; village jangali; [632] road and market jangali. Haraji and village jangali are collected by the Lowans of each village. Within the town of Geidam, road and market jangali is collected by Lowan Kolo Kolo [634] since the market lies within his ward. Nomad jangali is collected by the Ajia.

651 632 634 Several months before haraji is to be collected the Lowan compiles a list of all tax payers under his jurisdiction. This list is sent to Maiduguri and then to Kaduna, the capital of the Northern Region, for inspection. On its return to him, he collects the haraji tax. In Geidam District a kabuna is sent off to each Lowan in the district to be present when the lists [648] are compiled. This is counter to British colonial regulations which are designed to make the Lowan independent of the Ajia, [626] and responsible only to the provincial administration. Yerima's argument, however, is that the Lowans will not properly assess their villagers unless a stranger, the kabuna, is present to assure that they do not under-assess in making up the lists.

~~Geo~~lists.

651 The essential problem in the collection of nomad jangali is to find the cows and their owners, who are wandering in search of good grazing, and who are most likely to wander into the deeper thickets when the time for jangali collection nears. Once the cattle owners and their cattle are found, their names are recorded along with the number of cows which each man owns. Then, as he usually has no cash, it is necessary for the owner of a herd of cattle to sell some of them so that he can obtain cash with which he will pay the jangali tax. After his name is recorded, he does not attempt to evade payment. He is then given several weeks to pay his tax. Nomad jangali rates are [687] five shillings for each cow. If a man attempts to conceal cows, if he reports that he owns a number of cows and then is discovered to have more than announced, he pays at the rate of ten shillings per cow.

[683] [684] The prescribed method for collecting jangali is for the Ajia personally to ride after the Fulani and collect the tax from them for their cattle. In a district the size of Geidam [692] this is obviously impossible. It is necessary for an Ajia to have many horsemen in order to canvass his entire district so that he will collect an amount in jangali which corresponds to the actual number of cows in his district. This is the primary role of the kabuna. There are several approaches to the problem of jangali collection, relying on differing tactics, all used by Yerima. One is to assign important kabuna, who can be

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651 trusted, to large areas. A number of less important kabuna col-
634 lect the jangeli, under the responsibility of the chief kabuna in their area. The wakil, Wakil Ali, tours the entire district. Occasionally Yerima himself tours key sections, accompanied by a special wakil (formerly Wakil Guloma had this assignment, but [he has been replaced). A second tactical approach is to keep a certain number of horsemen in reserve. When an unusually large number of cattle are reported in any one area, horsemen are rushed into that area, assuring that all the cattle will be reported and that the kabuna there will not be swamped in their work. A third approach which Yerima used successfully in Magumeri District is to divide the entire district into strips several miles in width. Several kabuna comb a strip moving from east to west looking for Fulani with cattle, while other kabuna are simultaneously combing similar strips to the north and the south. When a group of kabuna have gone through their own strip, they exchange strips with another group and return in the opposite direction.

563 In Geidam today the Fulani are organized under Ardos and
651 Mais. A Fulani lineage is under an Ardo, appointed by the Ajia, Yerima Mustapha. When an Ardo dies, his people bring the man that they would like to succeed the dead Ardo, usually his son, to Yerima who appoints him Ardo. The Mai governs over all Fulani in a large area; he has many Ardos under him. In Geidam District there are four Fulani Mais who fall within the territories of particular Lowans. These are Mai Musa, Mai Kusur, Mai

563 651 Maganuwa, and Mai Mar. Several other Mais roam in the brush areas without being attached to particular lowanships. A new man may come to Yerima with a group of Fulani followers and ask to be made an Ardo. If he is appointed Ardo, he is then asked to which Mai he wishes his group to be affiliated. A kabuna sent by Yerima to collect jangali from a particular area records the number of cows reported by the Ardo or Mai for his group of followers in that area. Then the kabuna hunts down the cows [687] and their individual owners. If the kabuna finds that an Ardo actually has more cows than he originally reported, the Ardo is fined five shillings for every additional cow found. Each Fulani Mai receives a percentage of the total jangali collected from his group. The percentage that he receives (wujira) is in the neighborhood of six pence for each pound of jangali collected. The Mai then distributes money to his Ardos, according to the amount of jangali that they brought in.

651 634 When Yerima left Magumeri District in 1953 there were 28,000 cows on which village jangali was paid, and 59,700 cows on which nomad jangali was paid. In 1956, under the new Ajia, Digma, the number of cows on which nomad jangali was paid had dropped to 23,000. The drop in the reported number of cows may be because Fulani have left Magumeri District, but it is more likely that Digma is unable to have them tracked down so that the jangali tax is paid. This is because Digma has insufficient kabuna to do the job adequately. When Yerima first arrived in Geidam in 1953 there were 33,000 cows reported for nomad jangali. By 1956, there were 39,000 cows reported, an

[GEIDAM]

651 increase of 6,000 cows. The tax figures for Geidam District
634 in 1956 are as follows:
[652]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| village jangali - | 30,000 cows | | |
| nomad jangali - | 39,000 cows | taxes collected = | £ 17,500 |
| road and market jangali ..... | | | 3,000 |
| haraji ..... | | | 41,000 |
| | | total taxes | £ 61,500 |

Geidam is a large, populous district and the sums involved in
[433] tax collection are correspondingly large. Because Geidam has a large farming population, it has less bush area to accommodate nomadic Fulani and the number of cows on which nomadic jangali
651 is collected is smaller than in Magumeri District. Yerima
634 Mustapha's approach to jangali collection is to reconcile two
563 seemingly conflicting goals. On the one hand he attempts to attract Fulani Ardos into his district; on the other hand he attempts to collect jangali for every single cow within the district. Digma, the Ajia of Magumeri District, doesn't try to attract Fulani into his district, nor can he collect jangali for all the cows already there, though he tours a great deal and covers much of the area himself, which Yerima does not do.

651 The contrast presented by the two Ajias, Yerima and Dig-
634 ma, is enlightening. From the point of view of the British,
663 Yerima does an excellent job in administering his district, and
156 in particular in collecting taxes. The amount which Yerima
[648] brings in to the NA treasure is steadily increasing, and there is no reason for investigating his methods as there are no complaints. Yerima organizes his kabuna, who do the actual work of collecting taxes. Yerima himself does not perform the physi-

651 cal labor involved. Digma, on the other hand, has moved into
634 the district which Yerima left, so that the contrast between
663 the two is particularly marked. Taxes have constantly been
156 declining in his district, and he is continually suspected of embezzling tax money--otherwise how else can one explain the meager sums brought in from such a prosperous district? The threat of investigation and dismissal hovers over Digma, a [208] nervous and suspicious man to begin with. He is not liked in his district, is not a generous man, and has few kabuna under him. Consequently he is driven to go out and to collect the taxes himself, but the job is far more than one man could ever accomplish and he has only increased worries to show for his efforts. Every failure of Digma's recalls the memory of Yerima, who was respected and liked, who was generous, and who per-
634 formed so well as Ajia. Yerima's success in this as in so
663 many things derives from his keen insight into the traditional
554 social structure and his ability to adapt and use traditional
156 means to achieve his ends. The manner in which he maintains a large corps of kabuna, many of them slaves, and uses their services to his advantage while at the same time fulfilling all the obligations of a great aristocrat, are an illustration of this. Digma on the other hand is unable to act the part of a traditional aristocrat, and constantly lives in fear of those above him.

651 One way of handling the problem of inducing Fulani Ardos
634 to come into a district while at the same time taxing their
563
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651 cattle is to deal directly with the Ardos and Mais, bribing
634 them with gifts to come into the district. This is highly im-
563 proper, as the Fulani of a district are considered a part of
662 that district. Movement of Fulani from one district to another merely alters the source of jangali, but does nothing to increase the total amount which flows into the central NA treasury. Indeed, one source of concern to Yerima is that the Fulani Ardos of Geidam District will hear that the Ajia of Magumeri District, which is directly south of Geidam and shares with it a long unprotected border, has an inadequate number of horsemen, and will move south into Magumeri District out of reach of Yerima's kabuna, to avoid paying jangali. Should such a movement out of his district occur, Yerima would notify the Waziri in Maiduguri, who would in turn force Digma to patrol his side of the border to prevent the Fulani from moving unnoticed into his district. It is clear, however, that Yerima is not above offering inducements to Fulani Ardos to move into his territory and increase his tax lists.

651 Yerima's overall scheme depends on the stationing of im-
634 portant kabuna who are in charge of jangali collection in their
563 areas. These are as follows:
66

Grema Jisami - responsible for all the territory north of the Yobe River.
Kolo Kime - responsible for the area around Gumsa, and all the Fulani under Mai Musa.
Aba Chiari - responsible for the area around Kusur, and all the Fulani under Mai Kusur.
Kangadi - responsible for the Maganuwa area, and the Fulani under Mai Maganuwa.
Kazella Dokalia - responsible for the Zurukuduk area, but with no single Fulani Mai in his area.

GEIDAM

651 Mai Mar, the fourth important Fulani Mai does not have as-
634 signed to him a kabuna in charge of jangəli collection from
563 his people. All other kabuna remain located in Geidam town,
66 and are sent out to particular areas on demand. The primary method used by Yerima is to send out horses to areas in which cattle are reported. One aspect of Aba Chiari's job is to let Yerima know if Fulani are crossing over into Magumeri District, as his area is along the Geidam-Magumeri border.

Yerima is willing to reach a compromise in assigning jangəli payment to a particular Ardo or Mai which is below the full amount according to the actual count of cattle belonging to his group. If the Ardo is willing to accept Yerima's assessment, then both sides benefit: Yerima benefits because his kabuna have less work to do and can turn their attention elsewhere where it may be needed, the Ardo benefits because the total jangəli is less for his group than it would be if every cow were counted. It is through such methods that the Fulani Ardos are induced to remain in Geidam or to come to Geidam should they find themselves in the district of an Ajia who is erratic or uncompromising. Should the Ardo feel that he can get away with paying less jangəli than the amount assigned to him by Yerima, on the basis of information given him by his chief kabuna, he might try to hide cattle or to sneak away. Then Yerima would descend on his people with many kabuna and every single head of cattle would be counted and taxed. The threat of Yerima's many kabuna makes this an unwise course of action,

[GEIDAM]

651 634 563 66 and Yerima has actually carried out the threat often enough for all to know that he means business. It is much wiser and easier to compromise, and to receive gifts for having compromised, than to curry the Ajia's disfavor. In this way Yerima maintains harmonious relations with the Fulani in his district, and indeed with the Kanuri villagers as well, and satisfies the demands of the central authorities at the same time. The system is dependent on the work of Yerima's kabuna, who in turn are supported by Yerima. Ultimately funds to support Yerima's sixty odd kabuna come from tax funds, though this never appears in the accounting of taxes. Absolute loyalty to Yerima is demanded of all his kabuna. A kabuna found helping himself from Jangali, or using his position to extract money from villagers for himself, is severely dealt with.

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5. The Roles of N.A. Personnel.

178 63 The roles of a number of political figures have been discussed in some detail above. In particular, the roles of Ajia and kabuna, of Lowan, and of Alkali have been examined and in every case it can be seen that traditional Kanuri roles have persisted into the present. The smooth functioning of the political system of Geidam has been attributed to the ability of individuals carrying out those roles, particularly of Yerima Mustapha, in perpetuating traditional relationships and adapting those relationships to the changing present.

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634 178 177 554 However, in looking at the list of office-holders in Gei-

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175 631 [173] Local traditions are fairly unanimous in attributing contin-uity to this system of fiefdoms when the dynastic power changed hands at the beginning of the 19th century. Gradually the state began to be organized as it was of old, before the Fulani attacks, although now the fiefs were distributed amongst the family, courtiers, slaves and eunuchs of the Shehu.

175 631 642 An early British report in Bornu indicates some of the dynamic qualities of the fief system as it operated in pre-British Bornu.(1) Tomlinson found that from 1893 to 1900 Rabeh had reduced the number of fiefs and for the most part placed them under his major lieutenants.(2) Being a stranger in a new land Rabeh had to keep his control as tight as possible and rely on a few trusted followers. Therefore the number of fiefs were reduced. Alternatively, when the Shehu was re-instated by the British and asked to help create "Districts" out of the old fiefs, he attempted to make as many of them as he could in order to obtain as large a body of followers as possible to consolidate his power.

173 634 [562] Although there is no mention made in any of the sources on Bornu, Kanuri informants claimed that the Chima Kura had the right to sell a fief if he so desired. Titled women were also given fiefs which were, as in the case of a male fiefholder, managed for them by slaves or servants in residence at the fief.

173 651 The pre-British taxation system is remembered as consisting of two separate levies. One, the binkuram collected in binim (winter) was the property and organizational responsibility of the Chima Kura who owned the fief. Taxes were collected in kind at the local peasant level. The

(1) Tomlinson, F.J.F. Report of Nganzai District; 1918, in Prov. Office Maiduguri, Bornu, Prov. Nigeria.

(2) In a few cases, when the old Kanuri fiefholders declared allegiance to Rabeh, they were allowed to retain their fiefs. This occurred in the case of the fief of Magumeri in the 1890's.

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651 Chima Kura sent out a messenger from the capital to his representative in the fief, the Chima Gana, instructing him of the total demand of the levy. The messenger and the Chima Gana then raised the tax levy in the fief and extracted a surplus for their pains.

Part of this tax was given to the Shehu by the Chima Kura as sada'a (tithe). However, we are told that another tax was levied (also called the sada'a) which was specifically a royal revenue. Opinion differs as to the organization of the levy. Some sources tell of the king selling collection rights to trusted courtiers, while others refer to this tax as a special harvest tithe collected by the fief-holder and his representatives, partly for himself and partly for the king.

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[651] Within his holdings a fief-holder might use some of the area for his own purposes. For example, he might settle some of his slaves in a village and a large portion of the produce would come to him as his [792] rightful property. Or again, the fief-holder might give a segment of his holding to a mallam or a group of mallams (religious teachers and practioners) so that they might have land to farm and support themselves. [103] Very often such a settlement would be mahram, i.e. tax exempt. These areas [621] can still be noted in Bornu today in the names of villages. A village called Karliyari, or slave town is the present site of one of the old slave settlements in a fief, while the name Mallamari for a town refers to its past history as a town of mallams or holy men.

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651 In the case of the vassal states which were subdued in war, a portion of the tithes collected by the local chief would always be sent off as tribute to the ruler of Bornu. To insure that this practice was carried out, the Bornu monarch often placed a servant or a slave (never a relative) in the capital of the vassal state. When Richardson reached Zinder in the 1850's, he found an Arab of Tripoli who had travelled widely

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in the Mediterranean, ensconced in Zinder (a tributary of Bornu) as the representative of the Bornu monarch. A slave raid carried on into Bornu territory by the monarch of this petty state, for the purpose of allowing him to pay some of his personal debts, was condoned by the Bornu "consul" because a portion of the spoils from the raid was to be sent to the Shehu. Richardson also expressed the opinion that much of the real power in Zinder was in the hands of the Shehu's Representative rather than with the local authorities.(1)

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From the earliest records extant of the Kanuri empire in Kanem right up until the arrival of the British, a system of tax exemption obtained called the Mahram. Although it most often applied to religious mallams, who were recognized in this way for their esoteric knowledge in matters of law and religion, special services to the king were sometimes
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rewarded in the same way. These exemptions were always recorded in writing, so that when the British arrived and began instituting their own form
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of universal taxation many of these documents, some claiming 990 years of exemption, turned up. They were collected, translated and subsequently published by Palmer.(2)

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Judicial power was divided between the political leaders and the Muslim Alkalai (judges), as it is today. In the kingdom of the Mais centered at Birni Gazargamo, traditions tell of the Kainin Kanendi, literally the second to the king. This man was the chief judge of the state and, it is said, the second most important man in the realm.

In the house and the quarter of the Mainin Kanendi were twelve
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other judges, who with himself constituted the high court of the realm. In the larger towns, the king appointed local mallams to act as judges, from

(1) Richardson, J. Mission to Central Africa; Vol. II, pp. 182ff; 1853
(2) Palmer, H.R. op. cit. pp. 12-51.

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not present and appoint chima guna to live in each village of the District, who would collect taxes, levy fines, and hold judicial hearings, i.e. act as Village Headmen even though incumbents for these roles had already been appointed by the British. This led to an order by the Resident of Bornu in 1910 to the effect that no District Head could station his men in any of the towns of his District with the exception of his own headquarters. However, the provincial records indicate that the chima problem plagued the administration right up until the 1930's.

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Besides the structural difficulties which resulted in the political organization from the colonial contact, a major functional problem emerged in the area of taxation. By 1904 a tax collection system based on assessments made from rough estimates was instituted. Each village was assessed as a whole and the money turned into the Government (at first the Resident, later the Native Authority Treasury) through the District Head of each district. However, the Kanuri pre-British concept of taxation persisted long after British attempts to introduce their own concepts. The British attempted to introduce the idea that the District Head and the Village Heads under him were political functionaries or agents whose task it was to collect taxes, and not levy them as well.

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Although well known, this idea has not really ever been transferred from British culture to Kanuri ideas on tax collection and, as we shall see, what amounts to tax levies by local officials in excess of government requirements is almost a universal practice in Bornu today.

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The British soon found that "extortion" was being used to collect taxes. Discoveries were made by touring D.O.'s of peasants who would complain of excess taxation, or Village Heads whose prerogatives were being usurped by a chima, or in extreme cases by the emigration of peasants

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out of a very highly taxed District.(1) The net result was a high turn over in chiefs both at the District and village level, through the utilisation by the British of their powers of deposition of chiefs, and a continuation of Kanuri rather than British concepts of taxation.

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In 1914, a new Resident took over the province and began to strengthen the Emirate political structure at its center.(2) He instituted a Shehu's council with a Wazir as its head, and issued instructions that no European officer was to give direct instructions to District Heads. All directives were to be made through the Shehu and his council. This council, starting originally with two members, grew steadily in size and function. By the late 1940's it resembled a kind of local cabinet with the Wazir as its head under the titular headship of the Shehu and with each member having at least one portfolio. That is to say, the members of this Council have come more and more to function as the heads of civil service departments.

All African political organization, both traditional and introduced, was called the Native Administration by Lugard and his followers and the Emirate departments of works, forestry, education, veterinary services, etc., were dubbed the N.A. departments, for that particular Emirate. This distinguished them from the government provincial departments who administered and guided the policies and actions of all the N.A.'s in the province.

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The newly introduced European governmental services demanded some degree of western education and trained clerks from other parts of Nigeria were brought into Bornu to fill the host of small jobs which were necessary to a growing administration.

(1) In the Mobber, Geidam, Magumeri and Nganzai District Notebooks, notations have been made throughout the colonial period of complaints by peasants who reported that they had moved from one district to another because of excessive taxation.

(2) In 1914, the British swiftly and with little opposition took over the German Cameroons, half of which were ceded to them after the War.

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592 which housed his married son and wife and their child, and his other
621 son who was a full brother to the first. Across from his son's compound was that of his full younger sibling and wife (no children) and next to that of his full younger sibling was the compound of his patrilateral parallel male cousin who is married and has two children. All these groupings are semi-separate compounds, but have openings in the straw mat walls from one into the other. They are all semi-independent economic units, having their own farms and dry season activity, which for all of them, except the senior man in question, [426] is calabash carving and marketing. The senior man is a money-lender [651] and has comparatively large farm holdings. He collects the tax from all the household units enumerated above and remits it to the Village 556 Head. The rest of the males involved plant, hoe and sow his farms, 621 and go on messages to collect loans, or sell something for him. He, 571 in turn, helps them financially when necessary, gives them gifts and [577] represents them before the higher community authorities. They, in their turn, often manifest some rebelliousness towards the senior's power but at the same time are the only people who ever openly defended the morally degrading activity of money-lending, which keeps their superior in his economically powerful position. The economic and social security which they gain by maintaining this extended household organization outweighs for them the shame of being attached to a money lender's household, as well as the annoyance in every day life of subservience to his power and authority.

557 Thus, the manipulation of the ingredients of power and
571 authority are major determinants of local groupings of people into operating social units, although they are imbedded in a discernible

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621 This same process has occurred at Fallatari, a tiny settlement of five interdependent households, one mile west of Magumeri. Here a semi-nomadic Fulani herdsman settled about 1947 with several brothers. They asked the permission of the Magumeri Village Area Head for this privilege before settling. They have some cows but are today primarily sedentary agriculturalists. The original brothers have now been joined by two strangers, also Fulani, and the settlement now has the political status of a Hamlet, with the original founder as the Ward or Hamlet Head -Bulama.

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632 The political status of the first settlement still connects it in a subordinate manner to the parent Hamlet of Gworongo. All the people of Gworongo and those of the new settlement call themselves tala Lawan Minabe - the peasants of Lawan Mina - the Village Area Head
• [651] of Magumeri and its surrounding cluster of hamlets. The founder collects the taxes from the other males of the new settlement and gives it to the Village Head of Magumeri. He would rather take disputes with other community members to the Magumeri Village Area Head for adjudication, than to the Hamlet Head of Gworogo and does so. As the years
571 pass, and if the new settlement prospers and expands, bit by bit the
621 founder or his heir in this embryo Hamlet will come to be identified
622 as a Bulama (Hamlet Head). As long as people live in the settlement, the heir to the founder's compound will have the status of Hamlet Head and represent the little community as its political leader to those in the hierarchy above him. He will in turn be the instrument through which the political control of those below him is exerted by the wider political organization of the state.

361 In the following diagram of the new settlement near Gworongo, it should be noted that although the Hamlet-to-be has not yet taken on

[Text continues on p. 233]

621 If the extended household head can maintain the
571 subordination of his followers, then he is on the way to becoming a
554 "big" man which may eventually mean his attainment of the political
622 position of Hamlet or ward head (Bàlama), depending upon the location of his settlement. This achieved status is then stabilized through the inheritance rules.

The Village Area

632 The small village area includes a town cluster of adjoining compounds (usually 500-2000 population) and a surrounding group of small settlements (Hamlets) in the immediate area. The larger towns are broken down into wards, and as we have seen the ward head and the hamlet head have the same political status, that of Bàlama. This is
633 due to their similar political roles as local leaders under the Lawan (Village Area Head). In larger cities such as Maiduguri, Geidam, or Nguru, the "wards" of the city include such large populations that their head men receive the title of Lawan. These Lawans in turn have Bàlama under them as heads of sub-ward divisions in their jurisdictional area.

632 In the town of Magumeri, the Lawan has jurisdiction over all
[565] persons in the Village Area who describe themselves as his peasants. This excludes all persons who are directly subordinate to the District
[651] Head, the Judge, or the N.A. in Maiduguri. Formally he collects a Haraji (assessment) tax from everybody except the District Head, but in reality, he has little political control over anyone who has functioning attachments to the Bornu N.A.

632 The Lawan acts as his own ward head, of the Nguro Lawantari
621 (the Lawan's ward), and many of the compounds in this ward house the followers of Lawan, i.e. the members of his extended household organization. Some of the householders had compounds in this ward long before

632 if the matter is ratified by a person of authority in their community. Thus if a man in Magumeri town wishes to move his compound walls in order to expand the size of his dwelling space, he speaks to his ward head about it and they both go to the Lawan and speak to him of the decision. Lawan asks his men to find out if the contiguous neighbours object, and if not, the action is ratified. This supervisory function of political leaders, especially the Lawan, is a well used mechanism for avoiding possible conflicts in the interpersonal relations of people in town and village settlements.

632 651 The Lawan collects two kinds of taxes, although only one is officially recognized by the N.A. Firstly, there is a tax collected for the state from all settled people in the village area which is in the form of a property assessment on all males over the age of eighteen to twenty. Any amount the Lawan obtains with the aid of his organization above the amount written on the tax receipt stubs, is (illegally) [661] [648] his own income. Overtaxing in this manner is a widely accepted practice, but must be kept within limits, since a complaint to the British by a resentful peasant could bring on the dismissal of the Lawan.

632 651 661 The second tax collected by the Lawan is the zakat or tithe on farm produce. Unlike the first tax, there is no official sanction for this levy beyond that of tradition, and the power and authority of [648] the Lawan in his Village Area. Colonial officials assured the writer that this practice was illegal and occurred only sporadically. In a survey of 75 households in three Village Areas (i.e., under three different Lawans) all peasants who had produced a farm crop reported paying a tithe in kind or approximately ten per cent of their millet crop. In twelve cases the household heads declared that they had given ten per cent of all crop production including millet, beans and groundnuts.

634 Lawan's section), usually near the District Head's ward. They are often
647 shifted from one District to another. Only one of the N. A. employees living in Magumeri in 1956-7 had lived there for more than four years, and almost all of them had lived in at least three towns in the previous ten years. This mobility contributes to their social solidarity. Besides this common experience of mobility, they are for the most part city-bred, or at least city-trained, and form an extension of the urban bureaucracy
(571) out in the Districts. Their independent source of income from the civil service, plus their common interests in the city and the state, make them a separate class of cosmopolitans on the rural scene. Thus when asked to name their best friends, these N. A. personnel almost always refer to persons also connected with the N. A.

There is no simple formula to describe the interaction of N. A. officials in the Districts with the DH. In some cases it is similar to the DH/Lawan relationships when the Lawan is a follower of the DH's predecessor in the District. In structural terms this means that the official is not a loyal follower of the DH, but occupies some key position for which
634 the DH needs a disciplined subordinate. This occurs, for example, in the
647 office of District Chief Scribe. This official counts the tax revenues,
• 651 and prepares the balance sheets from the tax receipt books. Since it is important for the DH to control the amount of tax money collected, and to take some for himself to run his organization, he must be in close collaboration with the Chief Scribe.

634 In Magumeri (until August 1957) the District Chief Scribe
647 was a loyal follower of the ex-DH who had gone to another District. All
661 efforts by the present DH of Magumeri to win the support of the Chief
631 Scribe have failed. Other N. A. officials told the writer that the DH

634 By the judicious giving of gifts to
203 these travellers when they come to pay their respects in the District
[431] capital, the DH can build up a large communication network through which he obtains a many-sided picture of events in the capital.(1) Fin-
634 ally the DH is linked to a faction in the Bornu state which has its most
665 powerful leaders in the capital. Traditionally these factions emerged
662 from the allegiance of nobles to the various agnatic lineage segments
[571] of the royal family. These remain today but are now joined by factions representing some of the heads of the modern civil service. DH's linked to more powerful factions receive better information and more protection than those joined to weak ones. Thus the DH of Magumeri who had inherited a factional membership from his father which linked him to an effete second son of a former Shehu received much less support than another DH who was linked to the faction headed by the present Wazirí
[203] (head of the Shehu's council and the N.A.). Because of the constant contact of the Wazirí with all of the agencies of government including the British, the second DH had a much more intimate knowledge of the workings of Emirate politics at the center.

634 These informal links become important when it is realized
662 that the DH works under a system of conflicting standards all of which
648 can be enforced. Thus a DH must give large gifts periodically to his faction leaders, to the Shehu, and to many other persons throughout the state. The British see these as bribes, the Kanuri regard them as legitimate and obligatory. Since such expenses are not envisaged in a DH's salary he is forced to obtain the money illegally (according to
634 British standards). Again, the DH's success in obtaining tax receipts
651 is of major importance. One British officer told the writer that he did

(1) See the discussion above on nona and bɛrsum for the dynamics of interpersonal relations involved in "paying respects", pp.57-68.

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651 not care what the causes were for a consistent drop in tax receipts, the very fact of diminution indicated an inadequate District organization. In order to obtain the nomad cattle tax the DH must have a large group of horsed followers whom he keeps in food, clothing and all other expenses. If he does not maintain this large organization he cannot collect the taxes; if he does then he must embezzle (by British standards) tax receipts in order to do so.

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648 Furthermore, as in any bureaucracy, standards and their enforcement change through time in their emphasis, often as a result of changing personnel at the top. A new N.A. councillor became interested in school latrines, and started punishing recalcitrant DH's for not maintaining adequate toilet facilities in the District school. A British officer interested in roads was replaced by one interested in prisons and so on. These conflicts in standards and changes in emphasis bring punishments in the form of dismissals, transfers to poorer paying Districts and even jail sentences - and all this emanates from the capital. The informal links between the DH and the center help him to predict the course of policy and prepare for any changes in enforcement of the conflicting standards under which he has to operate.

The Organization at the Center

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[368] In Maiduguri at the eastern end of the royal plaza is the palace of the Shehu, the focal point of Bornu political organization.
[101] As a language and a culture Kanuri transcends its state boundaries, but within its organized bounds, the Shehu is the formal head of state. All measures, policies and appointments made by the central agencies are done in the name of the Shehu. Officially he installs office holders from the rank of Lawan up, at an investiture of "turbaning" ceremony which publicly proclaims the person's right to office. The Shehu is

425 571 The high proportion of land obtained by political and religious specialists from the political leader reflects the social relations of these informants, many of whom have a close subordinate relationship to followers and supporters of the Lawan of their town.

241 [651] [134] [433] Operating costs for rural farm plots are governed by two factors. Firstly, there are tithes (zakat) which all farmers pay to their local political leader as a form of traditional tax. Secondly, there is soil depletion which brings decreasing results for equal effort through time. Thus even with proper planting, weeding and harvesting, the yield on a one acre plot of millet may range from eighty to four hundred pounds of threshed product, while the range for groundnuts is almost as large (one hundred and ten to three hundred and fifty pounds of decorticated 242 nuts per acre). Farm plots are generally used for three to five year 425 571 periods and then left fallow for four to six years. It should be noted that this soil depletion factor tends to activiate the political organization.(1) The farmer requiring new land generally seeks the advice of his local political leader as to whether to clear new bush land or perhaps take up some unused old plot already cleared, if such be available.(2)

423 In summary, land in Bornu can be categorized under four headings: (1) private property, which today refers primarily to house sites in large cities: these are not deeded but they can be rented or sold in a commercial transaction; (2) usufruct property, that is owned because the holder uses it, or cleared it from the bush; this also refers to

[631] (1) Increased numbers in the household operates to the same effect.
(2) In order to avoid the anomaly of a higher political authority having to ask a lower one for favours, in places like Magumeri which house a District Head, a large section of land is set aside for the use of the incumbent D.H. and his subordinates. Thus the followers of the D.H. may apply directly to him rather than the local Lawan for land use rights. N.A. employees have their choice, they may ask the D.H. or the Lawan if they wish to obtain farm plots. In all these cases it is understood that tithing is unnecessary, for none of the persons involved are "peasants of Lawan".